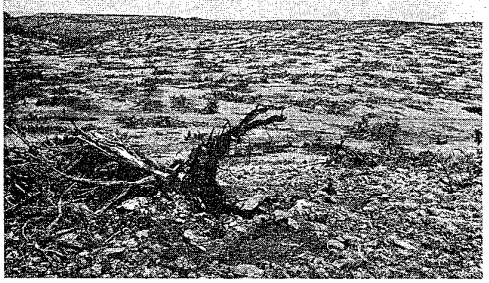
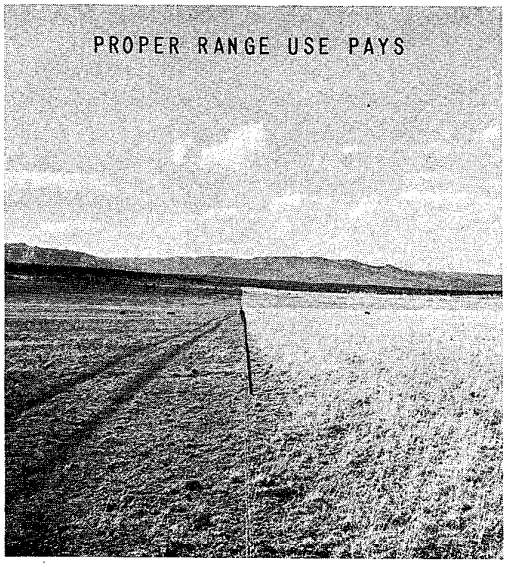
RANGE CONSERVATION - TECHNICAL NOTES

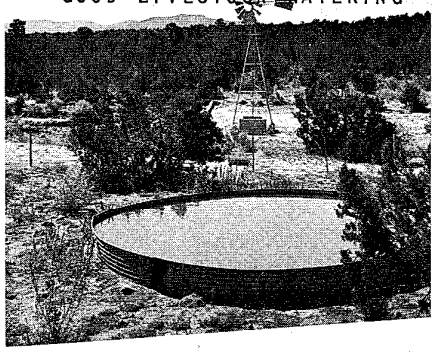
AL CHEMICAL PLANT CONTROL

CHAINING PINON JUNIPER

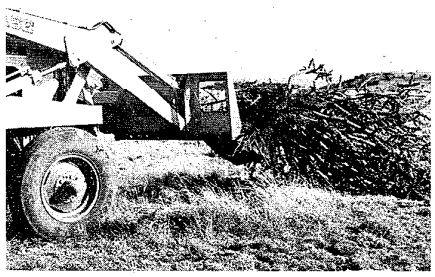




GOOD LIVESTOCK WATERING



CHOLLA CONTROL



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
NEW MEXICO

RANGE TECHNICAL NOTE NO. 67

RE: Alleviating Effects of Drought on Rangelands of New Mexico

Summary of an article "The Great Plains Wet or Dry" (History holds many lessons for agricultural land users in this region of the United States) by C. M. Schumacher, Range Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service, South Dakota, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, July-August 1974, Volume 29, No. 4.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ALLEVIATE THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT?

Before Drought Occurs

The most protective vegetative cover is the diverse, uniquely adapted mixture of plants that nature has selected as climax on a specific soil in a particular climate. On rangeland this is range in excellent condition. Therefore, using lands in the Great Plains as range and maintaining them in high condition is the most protective measure that can be taken.

AC's - 1 ea.
DC's - 1 ea.
Area Range Conservationists - 1 ea.
Adjoining States - 1 ea.
WTSC, Portland - 2
Director, Plant Sciences Division, SCS, Washington, DC -2

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On rangeland, moderate grazing during wet cycles or before drought occurs allows plants to become deeply rooted and vigorous. This is more effective in reducing drought damage than is the removal of livestock after the drought occurs.

During the Drought

Recognize that there is at least temporarily a large decrease in productivity of both range and pasture and make stocking rate adjustments if at all possible.

After the Drought

Practice moderate grazing so that better grasses regain vigor and reestablish themselves.

Rest the range if possible. Even a single year of protection is valuable in promoting the regeneration of rangelands injured by drought.

Do not be hasty in deciding that range must be reseeded or given some mechanical treatment. Range improvement by secondary successional processes is extremely rapid from an annual weed stage or poor range condition to high range condition consisting primarily of perennial grasses. Deferment from grazing alone can bring about a rapid recovery of deteriorated range.

CONCLUSION

Rangeland vegetation, with the diversity of species characteristic of high range condition, is the most stable plant cover and therefore the most protective.

A monoculture with its single species is less stable, but during the good years is more productive. A balance must be reached between protection and production that will afford Great Plains' residents the blessings of good years without suffering excessive hardships during the bad years.